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SPEECH BY U.S. AMBASSADOR JAMES F. MORIARTY AT RIBBON CUTTING PROGRAM AT THE U.S. EMBASSY CONSULAR SECTION

DHAKA, JUNE 14 -- U.S. Ambassador James F. Moriarty made the following remarks at the ribbon cutting program on the occasion of inaugurating the new consular windows and overflow waiting area of the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka today:

(Begin Text)

Assalaamu Alaikum, nomoshkar and good afternoon. I am very pleased today to be here to formally inaugurate these new consular areas. The consular workload here at the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka has increased. We are continually trying to find ways to meet this increased demand. Opening new interview windows and expanding our covered seating areas are just two of most visible ways we are working to improve the services we provide.

There are many other changes we are working on to provide better, faster service to our Bangladeshi applicants and our American citizen service clients. Changes include adjusting our local processing procedures and increased use of automated systems.

The area that we are in now, and the new interview windows that we will open with a ribbon cutting ceremony in a few moments, are both concrete examples of the steps we are taking to improve the services we provide.

Increasing interview capacity from eight to eleven windows has allowed us to process additional cases each day. This has decreased the wait time for both non-immigrant and immigrant visa applicants. This overflow waiting area has more than doubled our covered seating area. These are two important steps that we are proud to have completed in our program of improvements.

These improvements, and the increased processing capability that comes with them, are especially important as we move into the summer.

Traditionally there is an increase in visa applications during the summer as we process students seeking to attend U.S. universities. We are thrilled at the quality of the student

applicants we are seeing. Our goal this year, as with last year and the year before that, is to process 100% of the qualified students applying for visas to study at U.S. universities in time for them to start their studies as planned. These students enrich our higher-education institutions in the United States. When they return to Bangladesh as graduates, they bring with them experiences that make them better able to contribute economically, culturally and politically to Bangladesh.

We are taking steps, almost on a daily basis, to improve the visa process. We need your help as well. In order to ensure that all applicants travel on time, please help us serve you better by giving us the time to process your cases. For all non-immigrant visa applicants but especially for students, **APPLY EARLY**. Some issues can require up to three months to process. By applying well in advance of your travel dates, you can give yourself the best chance of us being able to process your case in time for you to travel as planned.

Some of the other activities we are undertaking include a multimedia campaign to educate our visa applicants, especially applicants for diversity, or lottery, visas about the risks of using visa brokers. This outreach has been very successful, and I'm happy to say that applicants are more aware than ever before of the dangers of getting involved with these criminals. In fact, with the cooperation of our security office, the Bangladeshi police have made several arrests; the police have broken up several of these criminal groups who were attempting to extort money from qualified visa applicants.

With everyone working together, we will continue to shut down these criminals and prevent them from being an obstacle to qualified visa applicants. Please tell your readers as strongly as you can: **DO NOT USE VISA BROKERS!**

Both inside and outside the embassy, we are working hard to provide better and faster service to our applicants. While some of this work may not be as tangible as new interview windows, or as visible as billboards in outreach efforts, they are all part of our overall plan to provide better and faster service to our Bangladeshi applicants and US citizen clients. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

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** As prepared for delivery*

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